

REMARKS**Drawing and Specification Amendments**

Enclosed herewith is a replacement sheet for FIG. 1

Specifically, FIG. 1 has been amended to explicitly show a subscriber terminal 105 within zone 103b, as well as to provide a reference numeral 106 for the subscriber terminal within zone 103c.

This amendment does not introduce any new matter.

In particular, it is apparent from the specification as a whole, particularly its discussion of zones and what is in them, that zone 103b would have subscriber terminals like zones 103a and 103c. Moreover, provisional application 60/100,130 to which priority has been claimed, explicitly shows FIG. 1's distributed architecture, with each of the depicted three zones having H.323 entities, i.e., subscriber terminals, communicating with a respective gatekeeper.

The specification has been amended at [0020] to refer to subscriber terminals 105 and 106.

Claim Status

Independent claims 1 and 12 have been amended.

Independent claim 20 has not been amended and the rejection of claim 20 is respectfully traversed.

New independent claim 30 and its dependent claims 31-38 have been added.

The following claims are presented for examination: 1, 2, 5, 6, 8-12, 15-20, 22-38.

Applicant's Invention

The gatekeepers of applicant's "distributed" architecture are gatekeepers that not only receive information requests from other gatekeepers, but also have their own associated subscriber terminals with which they communicate.

In accordance with the claimed invention, the three or more gatekeepers are arranged in a “distributed” architecture wherein a request is passed from one gatekeeper to the next (e.g., see claim 1, lines 5-10).

A key point here is that, as noted above, these three or more gatekeepers in the distributed architecture all also have “local” responsibilities for responding to information requests from their own respective subscriber terminals.

As discussed below, each of applicant’s claims either already has limitations directed to this point of distinction or has been amended to include such limitations.

Galasso

The above is not the case in Galasso.

The entities denoted as 310 and 330 in Action Control Point 300 of FIG. 2 are not subscriber terminals but, rather, gatekeepers. Gatekeeper 310 is the primary gatekeeper and gatekeeper 330 is a backup gatekeeper. See, for example, col. 7, lines 11-23 of Galasso. (Hereinafter applicant will refer only to gatekeeper 310). Thus there are no subscriber terminals associated with gatekeeper 310. Rather, Action Control Point 300 and its gatekeepers serve only to communicate with and/or respond to information requests from the gatekeepers (not labeled) in zones 100 and 200.

This is also true in Galasso’s FIG. 3. Global master gatekeeper 570 of Galasso’s FIG. 3 serves only to communicate messages between gatekeepers 550 and 560. Unlike gatekeepers 550 and 560, gatekeeper 570 does not have its own subscriber terminals to service. All it does is integrate the other administrative domains (controlled by gatekeepers 550 and 560.)

Thus even if it could be said that FIG. 2 and/or FIG. 3 of Galasso depict a distributed gatekeeper architecture, what is lacking from Galasso is any suggestion of applicant’s key recognition noted above—that all of the three or more gatekeepers in a distributed architecture can advantageously be gatekeepers that manage and/or control respective subscriber terminals.

Applicant's Independent Claims

Each of applicant's independent claims contains limitations that not only recite three or more gatekeepers in the one-gatekeeper-to-the-next distributed architecture, but that also require that each of at least those three gatekeepers has its own one or more associated "subscriber terminals" or "communicating entities."

Amended claim 1 calls for a method performed in a specific context, namely the context of a communication system including at least first, second and third gatekeepers...

**each of which communicates with respective subscriber terminals
and each of which establishes communication between its
respective subscriber terminals...**

Again, neither gatekeeper 310 nor gatekeeper 570 meets this limitation.

Amended claim 12 focuses on what goes on in a gatekeeper that is between two other gatekeepers of the distributed architecture, sometimes referred to hereinafter for convenience as an "interior" gatekeeper. The "gatekeeper," "first gatekeeper" and "second gatekeeper" of this claim can be analogized to gatekeepers 102b (in the middle), 102a (left) and 102c (right) in FIG. 1.

Specifically, amended **claim 12** recites both of the functionalities of such a gatekeeper. One functionality is to be a "conduit" for requests from the first gatekeeper (e.g., 102a) to the second gatekeeper (e.g., 102c). This is recited at lines 10-17. The other functionality is to provide information to a requesting one of its own associated subscriber terminals if the gatekeeper knows the information. This is recited at lines 6-9.

Galasso's gatekeepers 310 and 570 seem to carry out the first function, but do not carry out the second since they do not have any associated subscriber terminals that they provide information to.

Claim 20 has not been amended. This claim already includes limitations stating that each of the at least first through third gatekeepers in the distributed arrangement has certain interactions with associated communicating entities—both to transmit signaling messages between itself and its associated entities and also to establish communication between the associated communicating entities.

Of course, Galasso envisions such interactions between certain gatekeepers and their associated entities, such as within the disclosed zones 100, 200, 510, 520, etc. However, as already noted, Galasso does not disclose three or more gatekeepers that a) have such interactions with associated communicating entities and b) are also arranged to communicate among each other in the distributed fashion called for in the claims.

To repeat and emphasize, Galasso's gatekeepers 310 and 570 operate only to respond to requests from other gatekeepers (if it has the requested information) or to forward the message to another gatekeeper. They do not have associated communicating entities of their own.

New claim 30 also puts the claimed invention into the context of a system in which both the one-gatekeeper-at-a-time distributed architecture is used (lines 10-17) and also in which each of the three or more gatekeepers in the distributed architecture responds to information requests from its own associated subscriber terminals if it has the requested information (lines 1-8).

Thus claim 30 distinguishes the invention from Galasso for at least the reasons set forth above relative to the other independent claims.

Applicant's Dependent Claims

Each of the dependent claims necessarily incorporates the limitations of its corresponding base claim and thus distinguishes the invention from Galasso and/or Galasso in view of Maheny.

Moreover, limitations in at least some of the dependent claims even further distinguish the invention from the cited prior art.

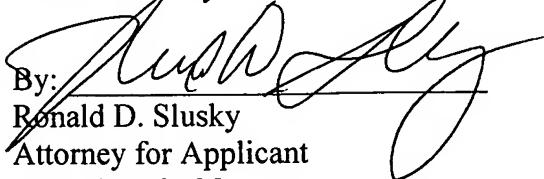
Specifically, at least claims 9, 34 and 36 contain limitations directed to the role of at least the "interior" gatekeeper—that is, the "second" gatekeeper of claims 1, 20 and 30 and the "gatekeeper" of claim 12—of establishing communication between the gatekeeper's subscriber terminals.

This functionality for gatekeepers was, of course, known in the prior art. However, the language of these claims serves to further distinguish the "interior" gatekeeper of applicant's claims from the "interior" gatekeeper of Galasso. That is, the

language of these claims serves to further distinguish the “second” gatekeeper of claims 1, 20 and 30 and the “gatekeeper” of claim 12 from the gatekeepers 310 and 570 of Galasso.

Reconsideration is requested.

Respectfully,
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